In every case at least a few beéngo in addition to the bombémbé and the botsí w'ɛ̂aká are always claimed. The latter payments can never be omitted. The belt is a payment made exclusively to the mother and by rights it goes to the mother's clan.

The higher the amount of these funeral payments, the more the son-in-law is welcome. The alliance is perfect. Therefore, not only will the wife's family reciprocate his fine feelings by adding a few more dogs, but in addition the son-in-law will be well received and successful in his application when, after the period of mourning, he brings the sum of the ibɔ́lɛɔ́ko in order to obtain a substitute for the deceased. (2) In addition, if the relations with

2. See Chapter III, Article IV.

his in-laws have been excellent, he will easily obtain the substitute in advance, so that she can care for him during the entire mourning period.

There are severe sanctions against the omission of the funeral payments. [439] Neglecting to send the notification gift alone is enough to set these in motion. They are: the breaking off of the affinal relationship; the loss of the children, since the father's offense is equal to a repudiation; and finally molestation of the culprit by the spirit of the deceased. Thus at Bokítola (Bompela) one can find two boys, Bonítsí and Ikembé, the children of Bonyongela of Ilíngí and Etáka of Bokítola. They have now been incorporated into their mother's clan, because their father did not send a mango. On stronger grounds the same is true for the whole nkunjí.

Article V. The Social Position of a Widow

In Chapter III, Articles II and IV, we have already noted that in the eyes of the Nkundó, the death of the husband does not dissolve a marriage. The union continues, and even after mourning it is not broken ipso facto. Even to have the woman taken and treated as a wife by another man is not enough to end it. As

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

596 invading groups of kinsfolk there was always one who was considered as the family head, and this man could claim the title of *mwene mokonda*, the owner of the land. Round this man the rest of the members of the family group clustered, and he had the general direction of their affairs. He could scarcely be termed a chief, having a paternal oversight rather than exercising any wide authority demanding organizing ability and political astuteness. The succession of *mwene mokonda* runs collaterally through younger brothers in the first place; hence if a first-born male happens to hold that position, the succession among his younger brothers is in the order of their birth. When these have all died the succession passes to the next generation. If all the males of a group die, it is possible for a daughter's son to leave his father's side in order to assume the position of *mwene mokonda* on his mother's side.

A *mwene mokonda* can delegate his duties as head to another member of the family, who is then termed *mokoni e ele*, the husband of the settlement. For such a privilege payment is generally made to the *mwene mokonda*. Round these *mwene mokonda* and their immediate kinsmen others gathered, forming, it may be, another section of the same settlement, known then as an *otaka*, or, if numerous, another settlement.[1]

624 The *mwene mokonda* (*or mokoni e ele*) hears and judges cases that come to him, aided
593 always by a group of elders, and directs the activities of the settlement. However, this does not entirely satisfy the Tumba; they want an *okumu* also. The *okumu* is chosen, not by the whole settlement, but by a single village, or it may be even one *otaka* of a village. If the villages of a settlement were without an *okumu* it would generally, but not necessarily, be the *otaka* of the *mwene mokonda* which would lead off by seeking one out. The group desiring an *okumu* are known as the *mokonda*, and they look about for a man of the same tribe but not of the same settlement or village, an outsider. He must be a man of some wealth, for actually he will buy his right of authority and pay heavily for it. If the man who is approached accepts, he is known from then on until his accession as *Nkumu Akulu*, the term *okumu* not being used until he is finally invested with the insignia of office, the *mantolo*, or hat of special design. *Nkumu Akulu*'s family is known as the *ekopa*, or *mongo*. This man,
556 once having accepted the invitation to become *okumu*, sets about amassing wealth in the form of wives and brass rods. He may be years about it, but he does not thereby forfeit his right to the office, nor apparently weary those who extended the invitation. Should *Nkumu Akulu* die before he is installed as *okumu*, or should he wish to withdraw from the honour bestowed upon him, the succession passes to another member of his *ekopa*. The succession would normally pass to the eldest male of the *ekopa*,
787 but many circumstances may interfere to give it to another member of the family. A dream dreamed by a male of the *ekopa* to the effect that he should be the *okumu* is sufficient to give him the right of succession over the eldest male. When asked whether it was common to lie about such a dream having occurred, in order to gain
689 the right of succession, those questioned received the suggestion with emphatic negatives, for this is not done to lie; any man so doing would be sure to die, and the [illegible]

[1] Where practical, the invested chiefs are up by the Belgian Colonial Government and are chosen because of their right to be known as *mwene mokonda* or *mokoni e ele*. Often, however, the settlements are so small and lacking in cohesion that it has been necessary to set up chiefs arbitrarily over districts very much larger than were their own hereditary spheres of influence.

An **ekumu** can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace. His movements must be slow and deliberate. The **ekumu** never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. The **ekumu** is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland **ekumu** frequently take advantage of this custom by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the **ekumu**.

In speaking of himself the **ekumu** never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

The couch upon which the **ekumu** sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same time as the **ekumu** are **nsumi**, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for the use of the **ekumu** is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba mo*, persons in particular; they do not count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'. Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the **ekumu**, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the **ekumu** only two others may sit upon it, *Nsomo* and *Mpenge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

The restrictions concerning the food of the **ekumu** are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the **ekumu** may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house set his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep. The Bosquinda **ekumu** must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland **ekumu** are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an **ekumu** must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (**ekobi**), but in a shallow one (**mpoki**), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as **nsukidi** is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the **nsukidi** that the dying body of the **ekumu** will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in references above, and have referred to the **ekumu** in council. It may be added here that he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them. The rules affecting the **nsango** of the **ekumu** are accompanied by severe penalties. There must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

must go to the *mondolo* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *mogo* and thus be safe. No trees in the *mogo* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother of twins, twins, Bawa, *mami*, and all members of the *mikondo* and *ekpe* are exempt from the laws of the *mogo*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *mogo*, what corresponds to a warrant is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the *nkumu*. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *ekpe*; it must be done by one of the *mikondo*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will try to get one of the *mikondo* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender.

In war,[1] it is the *mikumi o nke* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good fighters. He does not wear his *mondolo* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war.

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the customary *nke bolo* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word, *bisaga*, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same thing.

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Bawa. It is a rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious and can still speak, all "free men" clear out and leave the Bawa pygmies to their task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *mondiki*. Often this severe locking in the sitting posture, known as *ilima*, is sufficient to finish the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it is announced that he is dead, *nsikilwa*, this being in contradistinction to the customary phrase *nokwa nsikilo* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Women and uncircumcised boys were designated "husband" and "wife" respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In former years "husband" and "wife" were supposed to combine against their common foes.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilima* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the ambiguous position which is the accustomed one used for ordinary people and slaves.